



MASTER FILE

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DSSD CENSUS 2000 PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM SERIES # G-18

MEMORANDUM FOR Susan Miskura
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Attention: Decennial Design, Policy and Management Branch

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Subject: Visit to View Address Management System of
United States Postal Service

I. INTRODUCTION

The Census Bureau has agreed to use an electronic file of addresses from the United States Postal Service (USPS) called the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) to update the Master Address File (MAF) for Census 2000. Plans to conduct the traditional post office validation check with casing cards were dropped.

To understand how the USPS audits the quality of the DSF, the Address Management System (AMS) for the Capitol District was visited on November 22, 1999. The Capitol District includes Washington, D.C. and the surrounding suburbs.

II. COMMENTS

The Capitol District had concluded the week before its semiannual check of 40 randomly selected mail carrier routes. All areas of the country are required to perform this check. The purpose is to see if the list of delivery addresses matches what is on the ground. The additions, deletions, and corrections from this effort make their way into the DSF.

Several folders containing the results of the prior week's check, in particular the folder for Zip Code 20901, were presented for review. The folders contained pages of address lists. Several notations which were corrections to the address list existed for Zip Code 20901.

Most of these related to changes in the name of a business or changes in delivery location arising from a reorganization of offices in various office complexes.

An AMS specialist pulled up the computer menu that is used to enter corrections. The USPS liaison explained that the computer pulls up the national database of delivery addresses which is housed in San Mateo, California. The AMS specialist called up on his screen the addresses for Zip Code 20901 that needed correcting. The corrections were made and saved successfully.

The AMS manager said the Capitol District supplements the official semiannual check with informal checks of its own. Local post office managers pick routes for spot checks every week to every few weeks. A tour was arranged to the back of the post office for Zip Code 20901. The stacking shelves used by the carrier to organize the mail for delivery were explained.

The addresses on the stacking shelves are controlled by the AMS system. The address list based on the San Mateo database is printed out on labels for the Zip Code area. The labels are attached and covered with plastic to prevent the carrier from being able to cross out or write over addresses. This is a quality check that makes it easy to see if the labels maintain the same sequence as the master address database.

The AMS manager set up a drive along some of the routes on which the prior week's official ground check occurred. Three different streets in Zip Code area 20901 were toured. In all cases the delivery sequence on the address list matched the delivery sequence on the ground.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Based on these observations, the USPS seems to have a strong quality program for its address lists. No reservations about its use by the Census Bureau were triggered. This conclusion is based on observations in the Capitol District.

Some consideration should be given about whether a more broadbased evaluation is needed. This will require travel arrangements to a representative sample of USPS regions across the country.

cc:

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